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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: FORMER PRESIDENT GLIGOROV CALLS FOR
COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP AND A NAME DEAL

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) Still sharp and spry at 91, former President Kiro Gligorov met with Ambassador Reeker November 3 to welcome him back to Macedonia and to share his views on the current political situation and prospects for the future. Gligorov expressed his disappointment in the current Government's lack of courageous political leadership, viewing it as a key missing element to closing a deal on the name issue. He believes that with effective leadership, Macedonians can accept a compromise on the name, saying only the adjective to describe the language and identity of the people are redlines. Gligorov also suggested that Macedonia must realize that it is not the center of the political universe for the U.S., EU, and NATO, and must recognize the limits of other states' and organizations' willingness to solve the country's problems, a view not often expressed here. Macedonia's elder statesman offered a novel view of the country's need for a self-reliant, focused and flexible approach to resolving the name dispute. End Summary.

Statesmanship: Let Time Prove you Right

¶2. (SBU) Former President Gligorov commented on the lack of courage among Macedonia's current political leaders, saying they are hiding behind the "will of the people" rather than leading, pressing for change, and calling for flexibility in resolving the name dispute. Gligorov believes that the Prime Minister and other political leaders must insist on a solution to the name dispute, even if it is not popular, and should "allow time to prove them right" rather than polls and ratings. He cited his own decision to allow Macedonia to enter the UN under the provisional name "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" as an example of courageous leadership -- making a decision that was right for the country, if not popular with the people.

¶3. (SBU) "There is no democracy without compromise," and in Gligorov's view, Macedonian leaders and citizens must be prepared to compromise on "anything other than their language and identity." He called the recent Nimetz proposals good bases for negotiations and resolution, saying that barring a ban on the use of "Macedonian" to describe the language and identity, "all other solutions are practically possible."

The World Does Not Revolve Around Us

¶4. (SBU) The former President offered a refreshing view of the role of Macedonia's friends and allies, saying "we are a small country with a small population. There are limitations to how much the U.S. will or should help us." He said that Macedonian leaders relied on their belief that the U.S. could prevent the Greek veto in Bucharest rather than developing a strategy themselves before the meeting. "We must help the U.S. to help us," Gligorov offered, echoing a line the

Ambassador uses frequently with Macedonian interlocutors.
Gligorov added that the current leaders have done little to
make it easy for the U.S. and others to aid them.

REEKER